



## H.CON.RES. 323 – Expressing Congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day

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### FLOOR SITUATION

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H.Con.Res. 323 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA) on April 8, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on the Energy and Commerce, but was never considered.

H.Con.Res. 323 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on April 22, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

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H.Con.Res. 323 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Supports the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day;
- Supports the goals and ideals of advance care planning for all adult Americans;
- Encourages each person in the United States who is over the age of 18 to prepare an advance directive to assist his or her loved ones, health care providers, and others as they honor his or her wishes;
- Calls upon all members of this body to execute such documents and discussions for themselves; and
- Encourages health care, civic, educational, religious, and for- and non-profit organizations to encourage individuals to prepare advance directives to ensure that their wishes and rights with respect to health care are protected.

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### BACKGROUND

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National Health Care Decisions Day is designed to raise public awareness of the need to plan ahead for health care decisions related to end-of-life care and medical decision-making whenever patients are unable to speak for themselves. The day encourages people to use advance directives, which are written or oral declarations by individuals capable of making informed and voluntary medical decisions as to the care they wish to receive should they become incapacitated or unable to convey their wishes.

Advance directives offer individuals the opportunity to discuss with loved ones in advance of a health care crisis and decide what measures would be appropriate for them when it comes to end-of-life care. According to the President's Council on Bioethics, only 25 percent of the people that have begun "advance directives" complete them. Without complete instructions, the patient's desires may not be met. This leaves the doctors and loved ones of the patients to decide what they feel the patient's end-of-life care instructions may have been.

National Health Care Decisions Day is recognized on April 16, 2008.

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### STAFF CONTACT

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